

**MINUTES
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY**

Tuesday, February 8, 2011
6:00 pm McCloskey Room, City Hall, 401 North Morton Street

Next Meeting:

March 8, 2011 McCloskey Room City Hall at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Members present: Maggie Sullivan, Bill Brown, Andy Davis, Janice Lilly, David Parkhurst, Heidi Russell Wagner, Amanda Figolah, Dave Rollo, Amy Countryman, George Huntington, Ted Mendoza, Cynthia Schultz. Advisory member Michael Beczkiewicz was also present.

Regrets: Melissa Clark, Toby Strout

Staff: Jacqui Bauer

Chair Maggie Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

Representatives from IU Transit and Bloomington Transit were also present

Buff Brown discussed the visit by biking expert Mia Birk, scheduled for March 1.

Michael Beczkiewicz discussed the Duke Energy Go Green program, and mentioned some concerns about the amount of money that goes to overhead. He is continuing to look into this more and wants to make sure the public is aware.

Approval of the minutes: The minutes from the January 2011 meeting were approved.

Announcements:

Bill attended a meeting of the Big Ten community/campus sustainability directors last week. He will prepare a report, but found the meeting very informative.

Jacqui announced several organizational meetings taking place this week

Transit discussion

BT director Lew May gave a presentation on the connection between public transit and sustainability. He showed a strong record of growth from 1984 to present—nine-fold over 25 years. First year to break 1m riders was 1999, 2m mark broken in 2003, 3m mark in 2009. He credited their partnership with IU for this exponential growth, in particular IU's adoption of a mandatory transit fee. Ridership on IU's campus system is about 3.5m, so a total of about 6.5m for both systems.

For comparison—Indianapolis has the largest transportation system in the state, and have a ridership of about 8m, so Bloomington ridership is very high.

Lew also discussed BT's use of hybrid-electric buses. Has seen 40% increase in efficiency over traditional diesel buses. Now have a total of 6 hybrid-electric buses. The second purchase of buses (made in 2010) has shown even better efficiency results than the first buses

purchased in 2007. Return on investment for the hybrid buses has been If fuel prices are at \$4 or higher, the additional investment required for hybrids will pay for itself; there are also impacts on air quality and noise that should be considered. Regarding maintenance costs, BT only has 3 years of experience with hybrids, but anticipates some small maintenance savings. No data yet on how long the NiMH batteries will last.

BT is also planning a new downtown transit facility. They have proposed to include the City/County Policy 911 Emergency Dispatch Center in the 2nd story of the new building. They will try for a LEED Silver certification on the building. Currently waiting for approval for the change in scope from the grantor, but expect to move forward on construction in 2012.

Other topics: expansion of geographic coverage, increased frequency, late night service, and night-owl service. In the future: hope to expand Sunday service, further increase frequency, expanding geographic coverage, and reducing travel time; also of interest are advanced technology (including improved fuel technologies as well as Nextbus technologies and other computer-related enhancements).

Andy Davis raised the question of formula monies and other funding availability. Grad student Ray ?? spoke about his work with the Student Transportation Board?? at IU. The board came up with the Night-Owl service idea, and also helped implement the GPS tracking system for IU buses. The board is very interested in exploring PMTF funding (Public Mass Transportation Fund); BT is currently eligible for this funding. 70% of BT ridership is IU students.

Ray explained that there is a federal allocation to the PMTF pool in each state, and all transit systems in the state draw on those funds based on ridership and other factors. Lots of potential to expand our share of the funding if IU/BT better coordinate their efforts. Ray indicated that discussions on this topic are continuing. The 2010 allocation for Bloomington was about \$2m; if IU ridership were added, it would likely increase this amount. Concerns: since state pool is limited, it could be problematic for other systems if we begin taking a bigger percentage.

Lew said that BT is in negotiations with IU for a fully unified system, including unified policy making and other aspects. BT has made proposals to IU, and is hopeful that they will move forward. He echoed concerns that other transit systems will be affected by this. The fund is currently funded by a fixed percentage of sales tax, so the state legislature may need to find ways of augmenting this pot of money or finding other ways to address this concern.

In response to a public question: Lew outlined BT's initiatives to appeal to younger riders, including summer passes for minors. One idea is to make transit free to minors. Ray indicated that he didn't anticipate a reduction in funding if IU joins PMTF, and also that merging the systems may expand additional funding opportunities. Lew added that he has encouraged IU not to reduce revenue from student fees if they do join PMTF.

Are there ways BCOS could support BT/IU's efforts to improve their systems? BT needs support in talking to policymakers and elected officials at all levels of government to emphasize desire for improvements for all modes of transportation.

Are we ready for fuel shortages and rising oil prices? Are we prepared? They are exploring expanding fuel storage, hoping to continue to expand hybrid bus fleet, looking at other ways of purchasing fuel that will result in better prices for fuel.

Is light rail a possibility? Probably a better option in larger communities. Federal funding would be key.

Report from the Sustainability Coordinator

Jacqui gave updates on the effort to LEED-certify City Hall and the related sustainable purchasing policy.

She also asked for representatives from BCOS to attend the lunch (sponsored by BCOS) being held in conjunction with bicycling consultant Mia Birk's visit. Bill, Heidi, Dave R. (on behalf of the Platinum Bike Task Force), Cynthia, and Maggie all volunteered. Jacqui will share a digital copy of the flier about the event.

She also discussed efforts to organize the 2nd Hoosier to Hoosier Community Sale, and mentioned efforts to jointly market the event with several other reuse-themed events taking place at that time as the "Bloomington Resale Trail." This year volunteer recruitment will focus more on organizations adopting volunteer days, so she encouraged BCOS to consider adopting one day. Amanda also mentioned that the South High School environmental club would be interested as well.

Committee Reports:

ECPC: explained proposal for Andy to serve as primary representative with Heidi as an alternate. The proposal was approved unanimously.

STAR: Committee is meeting every 2 weeks, working with SPEA intern Jill Minor. Hoping to complete data collection by end of semester, with writing over the summer. Tackling energy section first. Jacqui outlined logic behind approaching the plan this way, including a delay in putting together a more comprehensive sustainability plan that will necessitate an interim plan.

*Dave mentioned need to emphasize liquid fuels, especially emphasizing shortages; Mike mentioned impacts of diesel shortages/prices on ability to move coal around

Water: The committee is working on possible rainbarrel and local school outreach programs.

Energy: working on STAR report.

Food: Continuing to work on efforts to establish a food policy council. There will be another steering committee meeting

Larger public meetings will be quarterly; subgroups will be monthly.

Hoping to look at starter garden program again soon.

Communications: there will be a meeting to discuss the Green News Network website at 3:15 Friday at the Courthouse.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.